

In the Claims

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) The payout as defined in claim 1, further comprising A payout device for controlling the payout of wire from a coil of wire in a drum having a drum axis and a drum body and a core coaxial with said axis, said coil of wire being wound about said core and having a top, said payout comprising: a first ring resting on the top of the wire coil and having a first inner edge adjacent to the core and a first outer edge spaced from said first inner edge, a second ring resting on the top of the wire coil and having a second outer edge adjacent to the drum body, and a second inner edge spaced from said second outer edge, said first outer edge being spaced from said second inner edge to define a continuous generally circular gap above the top of the wire coil such that the wire passes upwardly through said gap as it is payed out from the wire coil, and a third ring having a third inner edge and a third outer edge spaced from said third inner edge; said third ring overlying said first and second rings and at least partially covering said gap.

3. (Currently amended) The payout as defined in claim 2, wherein A payout device for controlling the payout of wire from a coil of wire in a drum having a drum axis and a drum body and a core coaxial with said axis, said coil of wire being wound about said core and having a top, said payout comprising: a first ring resting on the top of the wire coil and having a first inner edge adjacent to the core and a first outer edge spaced from said first inner edge, a second ring resting on

the top of the wire coil and having a second outer edge adjacent to the drum body, and a second inner edge spaced from said second outer edge, said first outer edge being spaced from said second inner edge to define a continuous generally circular gap above the top of the wire coil such that the wire passes upwardly through said gap as it is payed out from the wire coil, a third ring having a third inner edge and a third outer edge spaced from said third inner edge; said third ring overlying said first and second rings and at least partially covering said gap, and the wire being withdrawn through said gap displaces said third ring relative to said first and second rings and eccentrically relative to said axis.

a 4 4. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 3, wherein said gap has a radial width and said third ring has a radial width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edge, said width of said third ring being greater than the width of said gap.

b 5 5. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 4, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge, said width of said third ring being greater than said width of said first ring.

c 6 6. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 3, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge and said third ring has

a width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edge, said width of said third ring being greater than said width of said first ring.

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7. (Original) The payout as defined in claim *3*, wherein said first, second and third rings are annular rings, respectively having first, second and third inner diameters and first, second and third outer diameters, the core being cylindrical and having a core diameter, and the drum body being cylindrical and having a drum diameter.

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8. (Original) The payout as defined in claim *7*, wherein said third ring has a width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edge; said width being less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the second inner diameter minus $\frac{1}{2}$ said core diameter.

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9. (Original) The payout as defined in claim *8*, wherein said gap has a width, and said width of said third ring is greater than the width of said gap.

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10. (Original) The payout as defined in claim *9*, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge, and said width of said third ring is greater than said width of said first ring.

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11. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 8, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge, and said width of said third ring is greater than said width of said first ring.

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12. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 8, wherein said width of said third ring is generally equal to $\frac{1}{4}$ the first outer diameter plus $\frac{1}{4}$ the second inner diameter minus $\frac{1}{2}$ the core diameter.

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13. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 7, wherein said gap has a width equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ the second inner diameter minus $\frac{1}{2}$ the first outer diameter.

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14. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 7, wherein the third inner diameter is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the core diameter plus $\frac{1}{2}$ the first outer diameter.

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15. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 14, wherein said gap has a width and said third ring has a width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edge, said width of said third ring being greater than the width of said gap.

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16. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 15, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge, and said width of said third ring is greater than said width of said first ring.

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17. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 14, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge, and said first outer edge and said third ring has a width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edge; said width of said third ring being greater than said width of said first ring.

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18. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 17, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge, the third inner diameter being less than said core diameter plus said width of said first ring.

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19. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 18, wherein said gap has a width, said third ring has a width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edges, and said width of said third ring is greater than the width of said gap.

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20. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 19, wherein said width of said third ring is greater than said width of said first ring.

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21. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 18, wherein said third ring has a width defined by the distance between said third inner edge and said third outer edge, said width of said third ring being greater than said width of said first ring.

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22. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 7, wherein said gap has a width and the third outer diameter is greater than said first outer diameter plus, the width of said gap.

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23. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 7, wherein the third outer diameter is greater than $\frac{3}{4}$ the second inner diameter plus $\frac{1}{4}$ the first outer diameter.

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24. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 7, wherein the third outer diameter is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ said drum diameter plus $\frac{1}{2}$ the second inner diameter.

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25. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 24, wherein said gap has a width and the third outer diameter is greater than the first outer diameter plus the width of said gap.

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26. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 25, wherein said first ring has a width defined by the distance between said first inner edge and said first outer edge, the third inner diameter being less than said core diameter plus said width of said first ring.

27. (Currently amended) The payout as defined in claim 2, wherein A payout device for controlling the payout of wire from a coil of wire in a drum having a drum axis and a drum body and a core coaxial with said axis, said coil of wire being wound about said core and having a top, said payout comprising: a first ring resting on the top of the wire coil and having a first inner edge adjacent to the core and a first outer edge spaced from said first inner edge, a second ring resting on the top of the wire coil and having a second outer edge adjacent to the drum body, and a second inner edge spaced from said second outer edge, said first outer edge being spaced from said second inner edge to define a continuous generally circular gap above the top of the wire coil such that the wire passes upwardly through said gap as it is payed out from the wire coil, a third ring having a third inner edge and a third outer edge spaced from said third inner edge; said third ring overlying said first and second rings and at least partially covering said gap, and said third ring partially covers said gap to provide an opening defined by one of the inner edge of said third ring and the outer edge of the first ring and the inner edge of said second ring and the outer edge of said third ring.

28. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 27, wherein said opening is crescent shaped circumferentially of said gap.

29. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 28, wherein said opening extend circumferentially about $\frac{1}{2}$ the circumference of said gap.

30. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 2, wherein said first and second rings are coaxial with the drum axis and said gap is an annular gap coaxial with said drum axis, said gap having a gap width defined by said outer edge of said first ring and said inner edge of said second ring.

31. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 30, wherein said first and second rings are made from cardboard.

32. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 31, wherein said third ring is made from cardboard.

33. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 30, wherein said third ring completely covers said gap and includes resilient means for engaging the wire being payed out through said gap.

34. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 33, wherein said resilient means includes fibers extending radially across said gap.

35. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 1, further including a brush ring overlying said first and second rings, said brush ring being attached to one of said first and second rings and having bristles extending radially of said gap.

36. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 35, wherein said bristles completely cover said gap.

37. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 35, wherein said brush ring is attached to said second ring and said bristles extend radially inwardly of said gap.

38. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 37, wherein said bristles extend completely across said gap.

28

39. (Currently amended) A payout for controlling the unwinding of a coil of wire from a wire drum including an outer drum body having a drum axis and an inner core coaxial with the drum body, the coil of wire being received in an annular passage between the drum body and the of the inner core and having a top end, said passage having a radial width defined by the distance 5 between the inner core surface and the outer drum, said payout comprising: a first substantially planar ring juxtaposed to the top end of the wire coil and having a first inner edge facing said core and a first outer edge adjacent said drum body, said first ring having a width between said first inner and said first outer edges less than the width of said annular passage thereby defining a continuous circular gap about said axis between said first inner edge and said core, said gap being above the wire 10 coil such that the wire passes upwardly through said gap as it is payed out from the wire coil, a second substantially planar ring having a second inner edge and a second outer edge, said second

ring overlying said first ring and partially covering said gap, said first ring being laterally stationary, and said second ring being laterally displacable relative to said first ring and eccentrically relative to said axis as the wire is payed from said drum.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently amended) The payout as defined in claim 40, wherein A payout for controlling the payout of wire from a coil of wire in a drum having a drum axis and a drum body and a core coaxial with said axis, said coil of wire being wound about said core and having a top, said payout comprising: plurality of rings overlying the top of the wire coil between said drum body and said core, a first ring of said plurality being laterally stationary relative to said axis and having a first outer edge adjacent to the drum body and a first inner edge spaced from said first outer edge and from said core, a second ring of said plurality which moves in connection with one of said first ring, another ring of said plurality and said core to further define a payout opening extending about said axis at a location between said radially inner edge of said first ring and said core, said second ring overlies said first ring and has a second outer edge and a second inner edge, said core having a core diameter, said drum body having a drum diameter, said second inner edge having a diameter greater than said core diameter, and said second outer edge having a diameter less than said drum diameter.

42. (Canceled)

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43. (Currently amended) The payout as defined in claim 42, A payout for controlling the payout of wire from a coil of wire in a drum having a drum axis and a drum body and a core coaxial with said axis, said coil of wire being wound about said core and having a top, said payout comprising: plurality of rings overlying the top of the wire coil between said drum body and said core, a first ring of said plurality being laterally stationary relative to said axis and having a first outer edge adjacent to the drum body and a first inner edge spaced from said first outer edge and from said core, a second ring of said plurality which moves in connection with one of said first ring, another ring of said plurality and said core to further define a payout opening extending about said axis at a location between said radially inner edge of said first ring and said core said second ring is coplanar with said first ring and, laterally stationary with respect to said axis, said second ring having a second inner edge adjacent said core and a second outer edge spaced inwardly from said first inner edge to define a gap therebetween extending about said axis and a third ring overlying said first and second rings and being laterally displacable relative to said axis to partially cover said gap.

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44. (Original) The payout as defined in claim 43, wherein said drum body has a drum diameter, said third ring has a third inner edge and a third outer edge, said third outer edge having a diameter less than said drum diameter, said second outer edge having a diameter, and said third inner edge having a diameter greater than the diameter of said second outer edge.

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345. (Original) The payout as defined in claim *43*, wherein said core has a core diameter, said third ring has a third inner edge and a third outer edge, said third inner edge having a diameter greater than said core diameter, said first inner edge having a diameter, and said third outer edge having a diameter less than the diameter of said first inner edge.

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46. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 42, and a third ring overlying said first and second rings and being laterally stationary relative to said axis, said third ring including resilient means extending radially of said gap.

47. (Withdrawn) The payout as defined in claim 46, wherein said resilient means includes fibers extending radially across said gap.